



Interested Party testimony – Andy Boy
Senate Education Committee
House Bill 21
February 27, 2018

Chair Lehner, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Sykes, and Senate Education Committee Members:
Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on House Bill 21.

My name is Andy Boy, and I'm the founder and chief executive officer of the United Schools Network – a public, non-profit, high-performing charter school network, serving over 700 students in Columbus' most vulnerable communities.

I can appreciate the reasoning behind the bill—to ensure accurate reporting of charter school enrollment. I also support the idea of requiring community school governing boards to adopt policies to prescribe the documents necessary to verify student residency, and want to thank the committee for ensuring that those policies adopted by charter schools supersede any imposed by the district. We are hopeful that this will retain the autonomy of charter schools in instances where there may be a dispute between a charter and the district of residence.

It also makes sense to ask that contracts between sponsors and governing authorities of community schools include these policies.

I want to raise a handful of concerns, however.

First, this policy was changed in years past in part because of the adverse impact on charter schools; when districts “flagged” students, this halted our funding and created hardship. Under current enrollment verification policy, a resident school district can only “flag” a charter school student for additional verification if they have evidence that the student does not live at the residence claimed by her charter school. In those instances, charter schools send enrollment documents to the district to prove student residence. This essentially works like an audit, where certain student records are spot checked for accuracy—rather than *all* records, which could create an overwhelming paperwork burden.

It's my understanding that this bill would open up all enrollment documents to the resident district regardless of whether or not they have *evidence* regarding where a student resides. Rather than sending paperwork in cases where there is evidence of a potential residency mismatch, we could be required to send all documents on all students. In scenarios where relations between community schools and districts might be tense, one could envision a deliberate effort to flag students and create undue burden on charter schools.

This bill should provide for a mechanism to ensure that this doesn't happen.

Second, it requires us to certify monthly student enrollment to the Ohio Department of Education, but we already report that data monthly as a requirement to receive funding. We'd like to make sure that this bill does not impose duplicative reporting requirements. Overall, given how thinly staffed Ohio charter schools are, we are wary of any new requirements that would force us to hire extra staff in order to manage them. We already struggle due to Ohio's funding gap between traditional district

schools and public charter schools with keeping our salaries competitive and having enough funding to drive dollars down to the classroom level.

I look forward to working together with you in order to ensure that HB 21 results in accurate student reporting while not imposing extra burdens on charter schools.

Thank you.